

Interview



Major General Paul D. Monroe, Jr.

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Wasn't Homeland Security being overseen by your Joint Staff Division?

MONROE: Yes, and it still is; the Joint Staff Division is responsible for the Homeland Security program. Brigadier General Kenneally is actually going to be my advisor for Homeland Security. He's a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, and, based on his experience with the defense community and the White House, General Kenneally has contacts none of the rest of us has. He is going to develop those contacts, and he's going to oversee the development of our Homeland Security force.

ZUICK: Is the position of Homeland Security Director a full-time position?

MONROE: No it isn't. General Kenneally might think it's a full-time position, though, because I'll be demanding a lot of his time.

ZUICK: Homeland Security seemed of little interest to the U.S. Army prior to September 11th. Now, they want a four-star command. Do you feel the Homeland Security mission should be headed by the Army or remain a National Guard mission?

MONROE: Probably, both.

ZUICK: That sounds like a politically correct answer.

MONROE: But, it's true. Homeland Security is a National Guard mission, and always has been. If an incident happens in California, it's a California problem. Take the World Trade Center, for example. Although, it was a national disaster, the only military force on the ground was the New York National Guard. It would be the same in California. Having said that, if there is terrorism on a regional area, then federal authority would have to be employed, and it would probably involve a commander-in-chief of Homeland Security to coordinate the various National Guards that have been federalized.

ZUICK: How has California National Guard recruiting been affected since September 11th?

MONROE: It has improved.

ZUICK: Both Army and Air Guard?

MONROE: Both Army and Air. The Air Guard is virtually at 100 percent strength. In the last two

months, the California Army Guard has had gains in excess of 300 a month.

ZUICK: What's been your highest point since the September 11th attacks, as far as the California National Guard is concerned?

MONROE: My highest point, or the thing that has impressed me most, has been the response of our soldiers and airmen. They have been absolutely outstanding. They have been asked to leave the comforts of their families and careers and have done so without even a whimper, and they are enthusiastically serving our state and nation.

ZUICK: And what do you consider your lowest point since September 11th?

MONROE: The fact that we've had to federalize so many soldiers, and that they are out of our control, and that the active Army wasn't prepared to receive them. The Air Guard has a completely different system, and most of their federalizations have been at their bases, although some have gone overseas. They have been treated much better than the Army Guard troops that have been federalized.

ZUICK: There was much talk-even by the FBI-that the threat to our bridges was not credible. Do you agree?

MONROE: There's truth to it, but little significance. The governor did the right thing in warning the public. The Federal authorities had information and they passed it on to the states concerned. They left it up to the states as to whether or not they were going to alert the public. The governor is responsible for the public safety of the citizens of California. If I were in his place, I would have done the same thing.

ZUICK: Some critics have complained that guarding the four suspension bridges in California amounts to over \$10,000 a day. How do you respond to this criticism?

MONROE: Yes, there's a cost to being safe. Police departments cost, fire departments cost, but we wouldn't want to do without them. And it's the same thing here. The fact that there hasn't been an attack against the bridges speaks well of the security we have at the bridges. Besides, how can you place a monetary figure on the safety and security of Californians?

ZUICK: There were several reports regarding families of our deployed soldiers not receiving timely pay. Has this been corrected?

MONROE: It has been. It was absolutely true, and it goes back to my earlier statement that the Army was not prepared to receive our soldiers. Unfortunately, the Army Guard and the active Army have different systems.

ZUICK: I'm not certain I understand.

MONROE: Most of our soldiers were supposed to be mobilized at Camp Roberts. For some reason, they were mobilized at Fort Lewis, Washington and Fort Carson, Colorado. Those two installations could adequately take care of the soldiers they had in place, but sending our soldiers there overloaded their infrastructure, and they weren't able to take care of our people adequately.

ZUICK: That explains the pay problem, but what about family support? Are the families of our deployed Guardsmen being taken care of to your satisfaction?

MONROE: Well, not to my satisfaction. And that's because we haven't done a very good job communicating the fact that we have readiness centers throughout the state to take care of our families.

ZUICK: How many of these family readiness centers exist?

MONROE: We have seven of them spread throughout the state. Families need to contact those centers to receive assistance or information on their spouses or family members who have been mobilized.

ZUICK: There were some reports that over 40 of our Army Guardsmen, who were deployed to Fort Carson, complained that they were not physically fit and should not have been deployed to begin with. Was there any truth to those reports, and, if so, why was this allowed to happen?

MONROE: The initial number reported was 44. It's down to 12 now, and there's enough blame on this one for everyone.

ZUICK: Why is that?

MONROE: There are some soldiers who probably shouldn't have been federalized. This occurred in one organization, because a battalion commander took the soldiers he felt were not physically fit out of the line units and placed them in the Headquarters Company.

"Then, almost immediately, the Headquarters Company was federalized and they had three days to report to active duty."

ZUICK: So, there wasn't much the commander could do about that.

MONROE: Exactly. But, yes, there were some of our soldiers who showed up at Fort Carson that shouldn't have been there.

ZUICK: You've been the Adjutant General of California for nearly three years. What's been your proudest moment?

MONROE: The response of our soldiers and airmen since September 11th. Although, they have been responding, in kind, throughout my tenure, their response since September 11th has been truly impressive.

ZUICK: What's been your greatest achievement?

MONROE: I really don't know. I guess I'll have to leave that to the soldiers and airmen as to how they think I've done.

ZUICK: Is there any situation about the California National Guard

that you would like to improve or change.

MONROE: The California National Guard, as you know, consists of the Army and the Air Guard. The Air Guard has a more effective personnel system than the Army Guard. They get things done a lot quicker than the Army Guard does, and I would like to see the Army Guard system improve so that we could take better care of our soldiers.

ZUICK: In what way?

MONROE: Pay, promotions, career management, schools-all those things that seem to be a problem in moving along promptly and efficiently. That's the biggest thing I would like to see corrected while I'm here.

ZUICK: What is your biggest goal.

MONROE: I have two main goals. My short-term goal, of course, is to see that every one of our soldiers and airmen who have been mobilized return to their families safely and as soon as possible.

ZUICK: No one can argue with that. And your other goal?

MONROE: To have the citizens of California realize that they have this absolutely wonderful, qualified, disciplined, trained force of soldiers, airmen, and civilians that can be counted on to provide for the public safety of the citizens of California and to respond to any threat to our state and nation.

ZUICK: If you were to leave a legacy, what would you want it to be?

MONROE: That I have made a significant improvement in the quality of life of the soldiers and airmen of the California National Guard.

ZUICK: People who have known you for 20 years or more say that they have never seen you more energetic or enthusiastic. You're 65 years old. How do you do it?

MONROE: I just really enjoy what I do. I love talking to soldiers and airmen. It's like a new life for me. When I first came into the Guard, hi-tech was an automatic transmission. I am constantly amazed at the technology we have and the talented people we have to operate our sophisticated equipment.

ZUICK: You travel a considerable amount of time on behalf of the California National Guard. Do you feel that the time spent away from the office has had any negative effect on the California Guard?

MONROE: I hope not. We have some very qualified leaders that can perform effectively whether I'm here or not, so I feel very confident about that. The role of the Deputy Adjutants General that I have for the Army, Air, and Joint Staff Divisions is to lead their divisions, and they do a superb job. I think 10 percent of my job is leadership, and, probably, 90 percent of my job is stewardship and to be an advocate for the California National Guard with the state legislature, with Congress, and with the National Guard Bureau.

ZUICK: One last question. If you were asked to summarize your impression of the California National Guard in one brief sentence, what would it be?

MONROE: A brief sentence? That's easy. California National Guardsmen are the best qualified, the best trained, and the best disciplined soldiers and airmen I've ever had the pleasure of working with.

A message from the Commander



LTC Larry Kimmel

While we are all recovering from last year's horrific attacks, U.S. soldiers around the world are fighting the war on terrorism; creating conditions for maintaining peace, training for anticipated missions, protecting and defending our homeland, and restructuring itself as the Army executes its transformation initiative for fighting future wars. As the Army continues taking on new missions abroad following last year's attacks, its citizen soldiers are tackling new missions both at home and abroad. For the first time since Dec. 7, 1941, the military has the mission to protect its own homeland from foreign attacks. Camp Roberts has remained vigilant since Sept. 11th and will remain ready until the nation achieves ultimate victory in the war on terrorism.

Camp Roberts successfully mobilized and demobilized California Army National Guard units to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Desert Spring since September 2001, as well as to various parts of the country in support of Homeland Defense missions.

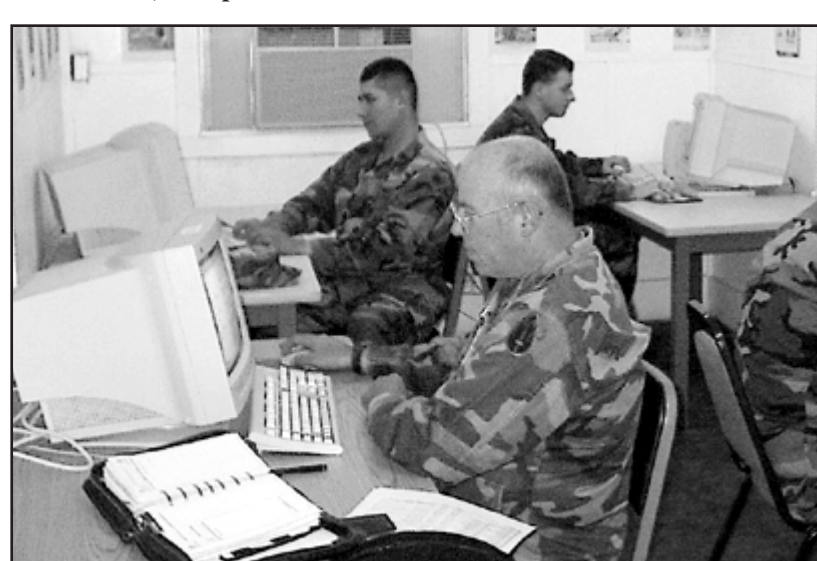
We've been busy. More importantly we proved ready and remain prepared for future missions, including contingencies if our nation's service members are required to carry the war on terrorism to other locals. I cannot predict the extent of our involvement, but I can tell you that Camp Roberts' role and its value to the Army and the Army National Guard certainly will not fade. In fact, our potential will most likely escalate sharply.

I'm proud to serve this great country and all it means to defend her. I'm proud of this installation's history. I'm proud of our citizen soldiers. Most of all I'm proud of my staff at Camp Roberts who work tirelessly to support the many and varied organizations who choose to train here. They are members of your community who live and work side by side with you and treasure the same freedoms you have come to expect.

I'd like to thank the local community for the continued support of the soldiers and civilians at Camp Roberts. I'd especially like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to fellow veterans in our community and remind them that their sacrifices will never be forgotten.

LTC Larry Kimmel

Commander, Camp Roberts



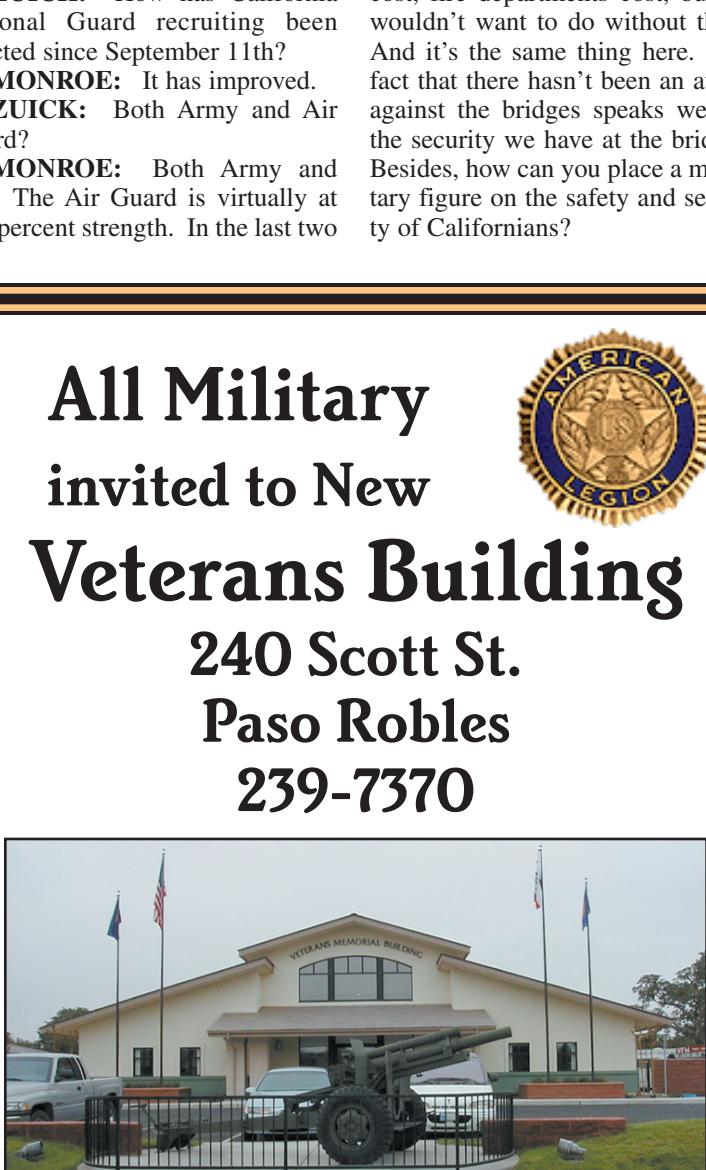
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